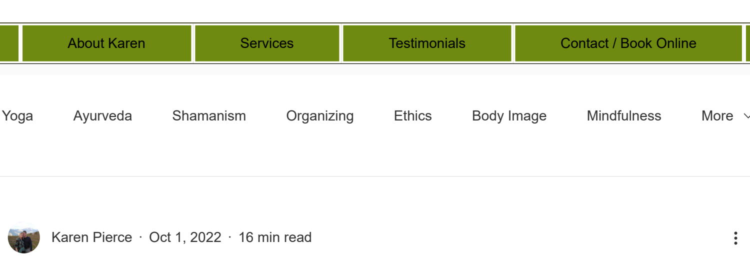
Karen Pierce · Oct 1, 2022 · 16 min read

The Healers: Goddesses, Witches & Mary Magdalene

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Did the word woman derive from womb-en? Why do the Jewish, Christian & Muslim bibles say a-MEN rather than a-WOMAN? Is MENstruation when your hormones remind you, your egg wasn't fertilized and you're not pregnant? What if MENopause is a sign that you are done with ovulation…and men (LOL)? Final question: Where did Christ come from? From God and a WOMAN. Man had nothing to do with it. We need a new term to describe HIStory. So, let's talk about HERstory and the feminine archetypes.

Archetypes are like stereotypes, collective beliefs, in the collective unconscious. Mental constructions containing a simplified, generalized belief about something that you use to categorize reality. i.e. All accountants are a conservative bore…or they are meticulous and accurate.

In my Feb 2022 musings, I mentioned we are entering the era of the 6th sun, that of the magical moon and feminine energy, coming back into balance. A Lunar era where the Mother and the Goddess were worshipped throughout the world.

Let's explore what archetypes of femininity function in our world, in our patriarchal world. Each of the Goddess archetypes are personified through mythology and arise through the fragmentation of the Great Goddess, Mother Earth, Gaia – the Creator and Destroyer of Life.

There are many Trinities. Even the Tri-Goddess which can be related to the phases of a woman's life – the Virgin (innocent, naïve), the Mother (nurturer, caretaker), and the Witch (wise, seductive). Or viewed using the moon cycle with the Hindi Tri-Goddesses - Shakti (ovulating, independent), Parvarti (post period, the householder), and Kali/Durga (on her period, the warrior). The Goddess journey, much like the lotus, starts with a seed, grows by gaining experience and knowledge and ends with contemplating our eventual death, reflecting on the meaning of life and illuminating the Divine within.

The Creation Story – Adam, Lilith & Eve
Reliable carbon-14 dating suggests Noah's flood must have occurred before 9000 BC. That means that the Creation Story happened much earlier like between 55,000 and 120,000 years ago. However, the origin of humans could date as far back as 230,000 years ago!

The most well-known story in history is the tale of Adam & Eve, the first man and woman. But then a talking snake comes along. Eve agrees to eat an apple and Adam (man of earth) was also tempted by the forbidden fruit. They are kicked out of the garden, and we've all been punished for it since. But is the Bible actual truth or a bunch of borrowed stories that have been transliterated, changed, and/or re-interpreted?

"And God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."

Many use Genesis 1:26-27 as proof that Adam indeed had a previous spouse. Lilith (also of the earth) was created at the same time as him. Both male and female were created together at the same time in the image of the Divine. Therefore, the Divine must contain both masculine and feminine energies - perfectly balanced.

Wait…What? Adam had a first wife? Jewish scholars were able to piece together the story of Lilith. The earliest text referring to Lilith as the first wife of Adam comes from the medieval text written between 700 and 1000 BC titled *The Alphabet of ben Sirach*. During the 1940s and 1950s, 800 scroll texts washed up from the Dead Sea which also discuss Lilith.

While God created Adam, who was alone, He said, 'It is not good for man to be alone' (Genesis 2:18). He also created a woman, from the earth, as He had created Adam himself, and called her Lilith. Adam and Lilith immediately began to fight. She said, 'I will not lie below,' and he said, 'I will not lie beneath you, but only on top. For you are fit only to be in the bottom position, while I am to be the superior one.' Lilith responded, 'We are equal to each other inasmuch as we were both created from the earth.' But they would not listen to one another. When Lilith saw this, she pronounced the Ineffable Name and flew away into the air." – The Alphabet of ben Sirach, fifth response to King Nebuchadnezzar.

Lilith is considered the first real feminist in history because she refused to submit to Adam because she was his equal; she was not willing to take on the subservient role that Adam was trying to make her follow. Apparently, she wasn't aware of Ephesians 5:22: "Wives, be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord." So, she left Adam & the garden and went to live freely in a mountain cave. Her children became demons (demonized) by mythology. God sent his heavenly angels to punish Lilith, but they couldn't because she was Divine. This is the first reference to the empowered feminine being punished and associated with the shadows (in India you have Kali & Durga).

Lilith is also mentioned in 3 places within the Babylonian Talmud which suggested she was a demon. When she becomes known as a dark temptress, a seductress, and the cause of a cheating man. Is it possible this depiction of Lilith is because of her sensuality and the Judeo-Christian ideology demonized sexuality? No matter, it's likely this view may have come centuries later. Despite the many descriptions of her, the common denominator is that she was a very strong and powerful woman. Lilith represents the modern-day feminist during the 70's when women started protesting and fighting for their own freedom. Like Lilith, women wanted to make their own choices, including sexual partners.

While the Biblical text says that Eve was created from the rib of Adam not from the Earth like Lilith, the Gnostic text demonstrates that this was a lie told in order to suppress the Divine Feminine principle. Eve was depicted as a faithful companion, an ideal & submissive woman rather than one seeking equality. This is when churches began to colonize femininity and the model of the soft-spoken, meek woman. This is how patriarchy and male domination developed.

The wounding of the feminine happened before Adam & Eve which was during the Mesolithic period 9,700 years ago. Eve should never be thought of as being naive, submissive, or the blame for the Fall of Man in the way the Judeo-Christian religions have treated her with their Bible. She should be honored for Adam's (humanity's) awakening to their true Divine Self. The story is symbolic of the separation of our Self.

We are facing our own feminine demons that have been buried in the unconscious. We were banished from the Garden of Eden, but that garden got internalized. We can revisit that garden through shamanic journeying. There is a golden light there for renewal & healing; to uncover a hidden treasure that is ready to be revealed to us today; or to discover a power animal or lost soul part (soul retrieval), merging the fragmented parts of ourself by merging the ego and the soul. Alchemy is the process of becoming gold, becoming whole. This is the transfiguration Jesus did on the mountain.

Check out this treasure of a beautiful dance about a Magic Tree & Serpent by the Mayyas (AGT 2022 winners) – Amazing Goddess Energy.

Evolution of Goddess Mythology
In India, they say that God/Goddess is beyond any name or form, beyond the mind, neither male nor female. Shiva/Shakti and the other deities incarnated into different forms or aspects of personality; they are like ice, different forms of the One. In indigenous cultures, the great spirit is seen in all of nature. We call Earth our mother, Pachamama, Goddess Gaia, a tradition of our pagan past.

The Celtic Goddess Sulis presided over the thermal springs at Bath. She was worshipped for her ability to cure the illnesses of people through immersion in the hot spring water. When the Romans arrived in Britain, they dedicated the shrine to Minerva, the healing aspect of Sulis. A place of prophecy as well as healing where the pools were said to offer up visions. At the time, the Romans believed the earth was sacred and the Earth Goddess was alive in all things. Once upon a time, everything was divine: spirits inhabiting all objects.

If the doors of perception were cleansed everything would appear as it is, Infinite. ~ William Blake

The ancient stories of Gods, Goddesses, Heroes and Warriors is one of the oldest mythologies some say going back 2.5M years. There is plenty of archaeological and historical evidence of a history filled with Goddess worship. So, what happened? What event was so great that it literally changed the sex of God?

In his book, *The Alphabet Versus the Goddess"*, Leonard Shlain questions the worldwide phenomenon of why "the demise of the Goddess, the plunge in women's status, and the advent of harsh patriarchy and misogyny occurred around the time that people were learning how to read and write. Perhaps there was something in the way people acquired this new skill that changed the brain's actual structure." He asks readers to reconsider the relationship between literacy and patriarchy.

Long after Roman times, women continued the ancient traditions of the old religions with a thousand small ceremonies in their daily lives. In Europe, they were known as wise women. They celebrated the healing power of plants, were often stewards of the earth honoring their connection to nature, were guided by their intuition, and empowering the divine feminine. They are the folk healers whose arts are rooted in their ancestors and Mother Nature. The original "Hag" meant sacred knowledge, medicine woman, not an ugly old woman. The "Christianized" Hag is a false image of the witch, many of whom were children.

At the end of the month, we will celebrate Halloween and the beginning of the Day of the Dead. Both holidays stem from All Hallows Day, a Catholic holiday. We forget that Halloween was once the Celtic pagan festival of Samhain ("SAH-win"), a time to welcome the Fall harvest, the "dark time of the year", and remember the ancestors. By the 19th century, Irish immigrants brought their traditional pagan practices to America and Samhain merged into Halloween. On Halloween, the witch is queen of the night. Just ask a kid what is a witch? Still hundreds of years later!

The word "Witch" means different things to different people. The word originates from the Old English words wicca and wicce, which means sorcerer and sorceress respectively. Some say its roots mean wise, holy, and sacred.

I like Devon Cole's perspective in her song called W.I.T.C.H which is the acronym for Woman In Total Control of Herself. But most people don't see that, they confuse witch with satanist, etc. This ideology dates back to the Renaissance (1300-1700) or witch craze. By the time it was over, women's power became associated with darkness and death, midnight orgies, satanic rites, and human sacrifice. There's a meme "it's funny how people are taught to fear the witch and not those who burned them alive." It's not witches who burned, they were humans and specifically women.

For over 5,000 years, we have been taught to fear the witch, yet we are still drawn to her power. Maybe we remember a time when older women were revered, and the conical hat was a symbol of knowledge.

"Witchcraft" is defined as the Craft of the Wise. However, through the ages, negative connotations were attached, and the word became used to dismiss many cultural traditions around the world. When the Europeans arrived, women who practiced rituals were called heathens and persecuted as witches. We still call these women witch doctors and charlatans.

The Christian church and state branded them witches and condemned them as worshippers of the devil and now the Devil got elevated to God's worthy opponent.

The Burning Times
For thousands of years, the women were physicians, skilled herbalists, and as doulas birthed babies. The cauldron symbolized the origins of life, the magical power of women, the cosmic womb, and birth. These healers were then suppressed because midwives eased the pains of labor for "Eve's sins". Like Adam was not a willing participant in the forbidden fruit. Remember, his first wife left because he was an oppressor, a bully.

Shlain offers another thought-provoking perspective to the disappearance of the Goddess from our world. Washington Post columnist Bart Schneider, says Shlain "makes the startling claim that the advent of literacy ushered in the demise of Goddess societies, and shifted the balance of power from women with their intuitive and holistic, right-brain orientation to the more concrete linear-focused, left-brain men." This male dominance led to the control over women's bodies, the sexual double standard, "marriage" by capture or purchase, enslavement, systemic rape, and female submission. Regardless of status, women were considered property, disposable, less valuable, and with as little rights as a slave. Even today, there continues to be a "domestication" of women to take control of their bodies through women's reproduction, sexuality, midwifery, contraception, and abortion.

By the Middle "Dark" Ages (800-1000), faiths referred to as pagan had mostly disappeared and by the end of the 1400s Paganism vanished and the Goddess overthrown. The period between 1450-1750 was an incredibly sad time in the history of women.

At the age of 18, Joan of Arc lead the French to victory over the English after 100 years of war between them. Two years later she was condemned as a witch and burned at the stake by the same church who made her a saint.

After 1468 when the Pope declared witchcraft to be a crime, female punishment and the torture of witches quickly grew. Women were blamed for everything from the lack of harvest, being barren, miscarriages to impotence, all of which took the pressure off the church. Husbands beat their wives or worse. Witch trials were profitable! Before the Dark Ages, property was usually passed through the women's lineage. Each trial made money especially if the accused woman was charged against her property and assets. It was a way to acquire (their) land! Just visit the Salem Witch Museum.

This led to a "Scientific Revolution" where techniques of inquisition were used to coerce confessions out of women. Heinous torture devices such as the Iron Maiden, Scold's Bridle, Tongue Tearer, Knee Splitter, Thumb Screws, or Pears of Anguish. Anyone can be accused FOR profit (profiteering) and they will all confess at some point.

The Bible fanaticism killed thousands of women. In Europe, 6 generations of children would watch their mothers burn at the stake. Their history, once lost, is being reclaimed by a new generation of women.

Kali, the Hindu Goddess of Creation, the darkness of the unknown, is the archetypal feminine force of Shakti. She symbolizes transformation as she dances on her husband Shiva (masculine force) with his severed head, symbolizing slaying humanity's greatest enemy – the ego.

There is a story of the ancient Sumerian Goddess Inanna. She goes through 7 gates (7 chakras) removing layers of clothing – our attachments, illusions, addiction. Then lays naked in the underworld. Inanna must go within, shed her previous identity, face her shadows, experience an ego death, and then be re-born into pure lightness. In Aramaic, the word death means "existing elsewhere."

Abundantia, Aphrodite, Artemis, Athena, Baubo, Brigid, Calamity Jane, Carrera, Cerridwen, Cleopatra, Danu, Demeter, Diana, Durga, Enheduanna, Ewa, Freya, Gaia, Gwendolen, Hecate, Hera, Hestia, Imogen, Indra, Isis, Itzpapalotl, Joan of Arc, Juno, Kali, Kannon, Lakshmi, Lilith, Lozen, Madonna, Maia, Mary Magdalen, Mama Killa, Mama Occlo, Miao Shan, Minerva, Medusa, Methis, Morana, Mother Mary, Mulan, Nefertiti, Nephthys, Pachamama, Parvati, Perpetua, Persephone, Pocahontas, Prithivi, Quan Yin, Rhea, Sacajawea, Sarah-La-Kali, Saraswati, Sekhmet, Selene/Luna, Shekhinah, Sofia, Thecla, Uzume, Venus, Vesta, Xena, and more! All these beautiful Goddesses, silenced by the church and patriarchy; their voices buried in deserts and caves.

Mary of Magdalene: Was she Jesus' wife?
If people could communicate directly with God/Goddess, divine Consciousness, why do you need the church? Paganism was a threat to their theological system of authority. So, the church got more indoctrinated.

Christianity renamed all but ONE pagan Goddess – Mary Magdalene – and instead offered many masculine saints to adore. There were 500 churches dedicated to Mary - the Pagan mother of God - over 100 years.

The portrayal of Mary Magdalene as a prostitute began in 591 with Pope Gregory I's Easter sermon. Harvard scholar Dr. Karen King believes that opinion lasted so long because it served the early church fathers: "this fiction solved two problems at once by undermining both the teachings associated with Mary and women's capacity to take on leadership roles." (History doesn't include women clergy, cardinals, or popes.) It wasn't until 1969 that Pope Paul VI removed this sinful woman identification.

When Mary met Jesus, she recognized him as the Christ. She became his partner, co-contributor, and twin flame. The story is NOT what has been said. Jesus had his own trinity – the 3 Marys. Mary, his mother; Mary, her sister; and Mary Magdalene, who according to the Gospel of Philip "he often kissed her on the mouth" (sounds like a wife to me). At the time, women played an active and important role in Jesus's ministry. But patriarchal religion erased most of them, fearing the feminine. Jesus said Mary was his favorite disciple. "She is mentioned by name 12 times in the canonical gospels, more than most of the apostles and more than any other woman in the gospels, other than Jesus's family."

Sitting to the right side of Jesus is the most honored place. In "The Last Supper," the figure at Christ's right arm appears in modern terms to be gender fluid. Most accounts say it's the disciple John, but he looks feminine. That's why there is speculation that DaVinci painted Mary Magdalene. He/she is the only person wearing a necklace/pendant/charm which indicates this person is most likely a woman. Many believe that medieval Christian leaders, seeing a woman in the picture, made a conscious effort to call the figure "John". Basically, they tried to wipe her out including covering over her image in the Last Supper.

That is until 3 copies of the Gospel of Mary were recovered. One of these lost gospels was discovered in 1896 but it wasn't published until 1955. All copies were missing the first 6 pages and 4 pages in the middle, but that didn't dilute the message she wished to minister. According to Meggan Watterson, "Mary Magdalene's gospel is considered an ascent narrative, a path that we can navigate to liberate the soul." This is what I described in the April 2021 musings about going within, to the heart center. That the second coming of Christ will not save us. It is in the embodiment of his teachings that we become a true human being. In Greek, the word Anthropos translates as someone who is fully human and fully divine. Watterson writes, "somehow, through the centuries, the focus on love has been obscured and replaced with fear." BTW I highly recommend her book, *Mary Magdalene Revealed.* I had no idea that I've been "preaching" the Gospel of Mary for much of my life. Love or above baby!

I resonate with the passage, "There is no such thing as sin." She continues, "We are inherently good. Sin in Mary's gospel is not about a long list of moral or religious laws; it is not about wrong action. Sin is simply forgetting the truth and reality of the Soul – and then acting from that forgetful state." It is "a mistaking of the ego for the true self, rather than remembering that the true self is the soul."

The last time Mary is mentioned in the New Testament is in John 20, when Christ rises from the tomb. Interesting that in the last 30 years of her life after Christ's resurrection, Mary Magdalene lived in a cave in the South of France, preaching and ministering. Legend says she was lifted up 7 times a day by the angles, transporting her to the peaks of the mountain range. Hmm….there's that number 7 again. (Did you read last month's musings?)

According to Kaia Ra, author of *The Sophia Code*, Mother Mary is associated with the South in the Medicine Wheel. She says, "She is an exceptional guide for when we're ready to surrender into our divine light. Mother Mary's unconditional love for us teaches us that it's safe for us to have a learning experience as divine beings in a human incarnation."

The Church & a Women's Holocaust
Christopher Columbus (1451-1506) and the Spanish conquistadores crusaded to save the souls of the infidels and pagans. Spanish colonization was followed by the French and English drive to convert native peoples and as Kyle Howard describes "disciplining" minorities into white cultural expressions of faith and life.

In 1493, the papacy organized missions and missionaries to evangelize non-Christians. Pope Alexander VI issued a decree and asserts the rights of Spain and Portugal to colonize, convert, and enslave the Americas and its indigenous people. Churches were built over pagan shrines and Incan temples. In exchange for organizing and financing the evangelization of the native people, the crown gained authority of the Catholic Church including the right to nominate bishops and archbishops. Here begins the Religious Eliticism - the collaboration of powerful political hierarchies and privileged secular authorities. And the demonizing of anything pagan, nature, spirit & Goddess (women).

The Christianization of Europe resulted in the loss of millions of lives. The Church of Rome forced its will which led to religious persecution. 85% killed were women which is about 9M over 300 years. There are no written records or graves…only the ancestral karma and DNA we carry from our mothers & grandmothers.

Starting during the witch trials, over centuries the church transformed paganism (witchcraft) to devilism (heresy).

The Return of Paganism
I don't consider myself a Christian even though I've had a powerful visitation from Jesus. I never felt comfortable in church. The idea that God was a man, that Jesus is our savior, and only male clergy could speak on behalf of them both just didn't align with my heart. I just never understood why I needed a "middle-man".

I know that many people read the Bible and other religious texts as "the word of God". It's not the Bible itself I'm uncomfortable with but the interpretation of it that bothers me. God didn't write it; it was written by men through their perceptual lens and is then distorted again through the reader's lens. In theology, hermeneutics is the lens you use in order to "read" or interpret scripture. I read books of dogma more from the lens of *The Pirates of the Caribbean* – "the code is more what you'd call guidelines than actual rules" (Hector Barbossa). That's why I find archetypal awareness so interesting. In the Gospel of Mary, God is not referred to as the Father or Mother, but as The Good. It reminds me of the Netflix show, *The Good Place*. In my decades of practicing and teaching yoga, I like the definition that it (yoga) is the direct participation in the extreme Divine intelligence that is you. In Mary's Gospel, it's to become fully human AND fully Divine; what the shamans call homo-luminescent. It's about being HUE-man, unifying ourselves, and integrating the Self and the Soul. Watterson says, "this ascension is about going inward…to purify the heart."

I couldn't wrap my head and heart around a system of ethics that shames and blames women. Singling out women says a lot about our culture. Singling out anyone EXCEPT white men, says even more. An entire race of woman introduced sin, the cause of the fall from grace, and the idea that sexuality is not a gift but the root of all evil. Really? I agree with Watterson that "there is nothing sinful about the body, or sex, or sexuality. Being human is the whole point." I align with the religion that existed before the church. There is so much wisdom existing in nature and the universe. When I attended a women's right protest, I carried a sign that said "Earth is my Church. Love is my Religion." That's why I love Yoga & Shamanism so much because of the archetypal explanations rather than righteous religious dogma. Everything goes back to nature or human nature.

"Dear Human: You've got it all wrong. You didn't come here to master unconditional love. That is where you came from and where you'll return. You came here to learn personal love. Universal love. Messy love. Sweaty love. Crazy love. Broken love. Whole love. Infused with divinity. Lived through the grace of stumbling. Demonstrated through the beauty of…messing up. Often. You didn't come here to be perfect. You already are. You came here to be gorgeously human. Flawed and fabulous. And then to rise again into remembering." ~ Courtney Walsh

According to the 13 indigenous grandmothers, "women carry the ancient knowledge of the Divine feminine deep within the very cells of their being. Because their bodies are subject to the great cycles of the moon and stars, women's wisdom is connected to the very heavens. We must be strong and walk in our innate knowledge and power under the protection of the 4 directions. With the world on the brink of destruction, women must wake up this great force they possess and bring the world back to peace and harmony." The Goddess is calling for you to travel within and meet with her.

HIS-tory is derived from the Greek word "historia" which means to inquire or to know; it's a collection of stories, factual or otherwise. I recognize that the "his" part of history is just coincidence; however, it can be justifiably argued that most history up until recent times was certainly written by men, predominantly white. Herstory was invented in the late 20th century to mean history that is written by women.

Gabriela Poller-Hartig says, "In an ideal world, it is neither HIStory nor HERstory. It should be OURSTORY." Thank Goddess.

#Archetypes #Feminine #Womb #Pagan #Witch #Goddess #Trinity #Lotus #TwinFlame #Transfiguration

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